

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for processing an electronic document, wherein the document comprises a plurality of data fields and wherein the document is made accessible by a first party to a second party via a computer network, comprising:
 - enabling a second party to add one or more further data fields to one or more of the data fields of the document.
2. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
 - enabling said second party to enter information into the one or more further data fields.
3. The method of claim 2, further comprising:
 - providing, by the first party, proposals for the information to the second party according to a predefinable list.
4. The method of claim 1, wherein the document is an electronic bill.
5. The method of claim 4, further comprising:
 - writing, by the first party, financial information into the one or more further data fields and adding the one or more further data fields to the electronic bill.
6. The method of claim 5, further comprising:
 - selecting the financial information from the group consisting of financial objects, accounting objects, and bookkeeping objects.
7. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
 - writing a predefinable value into one or more of the further data fields.

8. The method of claim 1, wherein enabling said second party to add one or more further data fields to one or more of the data fields of the document comprises providing one or more structured documents.
9. The method of claim 8, wherein the structured document comprises data and/or tags and/or program code and wherein the structured document is accessible by the second party.
10. The method of claim 8, wherein at least one of the structured documents is a structured table, an XML-file, a HTML-file, or a java server page.
11. The method of claim 4, further comprising:
 - enabling the second party to characterize the bill as accepted or refused.
12. The method of one claim 11, further comprising:
 - sending an accepted electronic bill to the second party and/or to a payment service provider.
13. The method of claim 12, further comprising:
 - creating an accounts record from an accepted bill and sending it to the second party.
14. The method of claim 1, wherein two or more of the further data fields are structured hierarchical.
15. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
 - assigning to one or more of the further data fields a property selected from the

group consisting of displayable, non-displayable, optionally editable, and mandatory
editable.

16. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
naming the one or more further data fields by the first party.
17. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
checking an authorization of a user of the second party.
18. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
making the document accessible to the second party by means of an intranet or
the Internet.
19. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
counting the documents and providing an invoice for the processing of the
documents to the second party.
20. The method of claim 4, further comprising:
automatically starting a workflow for processing the bill if an electronic bill is
received from a third party.
21. The method of claim 20, further comprising:
sending an electronic notice, which includes a link to the document to an address
contained in the workflow.
22. The method of claim 20, wherein the workflow runs according to a predefinable
sequence.

23. The method of claim 20, further comprising:
automatically checking an authorization of a participant of the workflow.
24. The method of claim 1, wherein the method is for use with an enterprise accounting system.
25. A computer system for processing an electronic document, wherein the document comprises a plurality of data fields and wherein the document is made accessible by a first party to a second party via a computer network, comprising:
memory having program instructions;
input means for receiving and entering data;
output means for sending and presenting data;
storage means for storing data; and
a processor responsive to the program instructions, said program instructions comprising program code means for performing a method according to any one of claims 1 to 23.
26. The computer system of claim 25, wherein the computer system is for use with an enterprise accounting system.
27. A computer system for processing an electronic bill, comprising:
memory having program instructions;
input means for receiving and entering data;
output means for sending and presenting data;
storage means for storing data; and
a processor responsive to the program instructions,

wherein a method according to claim 1 is performed to process the electronic bill when said program instructions are executed by said processor.

28. A computer readable medium comprising instructions for processing an electronic document, wherein the document comprises a plurality of data fields and wherein the document is made accessible by a first party to a second party via a computer network, said instructions comprising instructions for:

enabling a second party to add one or more further data fields to one or more of the data fields of the document.

29. The computer readable medium of claim 28, further comprising instructions for: enabling said second party to enter information into the one or more further data fields.

30. The computer readable medium of claim 28, further comprising instructions for: enabling said first party to provide proposals for the information to the second party according to a predefinable list.

31. The computer readable medium of claim 28, wherein the document is an electronic bill.

32. The computer readable medium of claim 31, further comprising instructions for: enabling said first party to write financial information into the one or more further data fields and add the one or more further data fields to the electronic bill.

33. The computer readable medium of claim 32, further comprising instructions for:
selecting the financial information from the group consisting of financial objects,
accounting objects, and bookkeeping objects.
34. The computer readable medium of claim 28, further comprising instructions for:
writing a predefinable value into one or more of the further data fields.
35. The computer readable medium of claim 28, wherein the instructions for enabling
said second party to add one or more further data fields to one or more of the data fields
of the document comprises instructions for providing one or more structured documents.
36. The computer readable medium of claim 35, wherein the structured document
comprises data and/or tags and/or program code and the structured document is
accessible by the second party.
37. The computer readable medium of claim 35, wherein at least one of the
structured documents is a structured table, an XML-file, a HTML-file, or a java server
page.
38. The computer readable medium of claim 31, further comprising instructions for:
enabling the second party to characterize the bill as accepted or refused.
39. The computer readable medium of claim 38, further comprising instructions for:
sending an accepted electronic bill to the second party and/or to a payment
service provider.

40. The computer readable medium of claim 39, further comprising instructions for: creating an accounts record from an accepted bill and sending it to the second party.
41. The computer readable medium of claim 28, further comprising instructions for: hierarchically structuring two or more of the further data fields.
42. The computer readable medium of claim 28, further comprising instructions for: assigning to one or more of the further data fields a property selected from the group consisting of displayable, non-displayable, optionally editable, and mandatory editable.
43. The computer readable medium claim 28, further comprising instructions for: naming the one or more further data fields.
44. The computer readable medium of claim 28, further comprising instructions for: checking an authorization of a user of the second party.
45. The computer readable medium of claim 28, further comprising instructions for: making the document accessible to the second party by means of an intranet or the Internet.
46. The computer readable medium of claim 28, further comprising instructions for: counting the documents and providing an invoice for the processing of the documents to the second party.

47. The computer readable medium of one or more of claim 31, further comprising instructions for:

automatically starting a workflow for processing the bill if an electronic bill is received from a third party.

48. The computer readable medium of claim 47, further comprising instructions for:

sending an electronic notice, which includes a link to the document, to an address contained in the workflow.

49. The computer readable medium claim 47, wherein the workflow runs according to a predefinable sequence.

50. The computer readable medium of claim 47, further comprising instructions for:

automatically checking an authorization of a participant of the workflow.

51. The computer readable medium according to any of claims 28 to 50, wherein the computer readable medium is for use with an enterprise accounting system.

52. The computer readable medium according to any one of claims 28 to 50, wherein the computer readable medium is a computer data signal embodied in a carrier wave.

53. A method for processing documents using a computer system, in which the document is available in electronic form with one or more data fields which contain document information, and in which method one or more electronic documents are made accessible to a second party by a first party via a computer network, the method comprising:

automatically providing one or more structured documents to the second party, which allows the second party to add one or more further data fields to one or more data fields in the or each electronic document.

54. The method of claim 53, wherein a reference to the storage location of the or each structured document is presented to the second party.

55. The method of claim 53, wherein the second party uses a network connection to access the structured document.

56. The method of claim 53, wherein the or each structured document contains data and/or tags and/or program code, so that the second party, which is accessing the structured document, is provided with a list of one or more data fields for selection and/or editing and/or addition.

57. The method of claim 53, wherein the structured document is a structured table, an XML file, an HTML file, or a Java Server Page.

58. The method of claim 53, wherein the second party uses a web browser to access the or each structured document over a network or the Internet.

59. The method of claim 53, wherein the structured document contains a reference to the storage location of the electronic document.

60. The method of claim 53, wherein the or each further data field is preallocated a default value.

61. The method of claim 53, wherein the second party is provided with means for inputting information into the or each further data field.
62. The method of claim 53, wherein the document is an invoice.
63. The method of claim 62, wherein the second party is provided with means for acknowledging the invoice.
64. The method of claim 53, further comprising sending the or each structured document to the second party.
65. The method of claim 53, wherein the electronic document and/or the structured document is encrypted.
66. The method of claim 53, wherein a workflow for processing the or each structured document is started.
67. The method of claim 53, wherein the electronic document is automatically checked for presetable criteria.
68. The method of claim 53, wherein the electronic document and/or the structured document is digitally signed.
69. The method of claim 62, further comprising forwarding the invoice to a payment service.
70. The method according to any one of claims 61 to 69, wherein the information is invoice information and comprises information regarding addresses for the invoice issuer and/or for the invoice receiver and/or for the payment service and/or regarding

payment and/or regarding VAT and/or regarding invoice items with respect to the underlying order and/or regarding commentary.

71. The method of claim 62, wherein the further data fields are provided for inputting account assignment information.

72. A method for processing a electronic document, stored in a computer system of a first party, by a second party, wherein the document comprises a plurality of data fields and wherein the document is made accessible by the first party to the second party via a computer network, the method comprising:

accessing one or more structured documents presented by the first party and adding and/or editing one or more further data fields to the electronic document by means of said one or more structured documents.

73. The method of claim 72, further comprising:

receiving a link to one of the structured documents.

74. The method of claim 72, further comprising:

accessing the one or more structured documents via a network.

75. The method of claim 72, wherein:

at least one of the structured documents comprise tags and/or program code, for enabling the second party to select one or more further data fields for editing and/or adding to the electronic document.

76. The method of claim 72, wherein:

at least one of the structured documents is a HTML- or XML-file, a structured table, or a Java Server Page.

77. The method of claim 72, wherein:

at least one of the structured documents contains a link to the electronic document.

78. The method of claim 72, wherein:

the electronic document is an invoice.

79. The method of claim 72, further comprising:

entering financial information into the one or more further data fields.

80. A computer system comprising:

memory comprising program instructions;

input means for receiving and entering data;

output means for sending and presenting data storage means for storing data;

and

a processor responsive to the program instructions;

wherein the program instructions comprise program code means for carrying out a method as claimed according to any one of claims 53 to 69, or 71 to 79.

81. A computer program comprising program code means for executing all the steps in any method as claimed according to any one of claims 1 to 23, 53 to 69, or 71 to 79 when executed on a computer.
82. A computer program as claimed in claim 81, wherein the computer program is contained in an electrical carrier signal.